

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
St. Johns County, Florida
Regular Meeting

March 16, 2022
Minutes

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) of St. Johns County met at 3:00 pm at the Health & Human Services Center, in the Kingfisher Conference room, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida 32084.

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm by Chair, Steve Ladrado

Members Present:

Henry Dean- Locally elected official
Steven Ladrado- Citizen representing employers within St. Johns County
Jay Braxton- St. Johns County Resident
Michael O'Donnell- HFA Chair/ Citizen actively engaged as an advocate for low-income persons
Bill Lazar- Citizen actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing
Alex Mansur- Citizen actively engaged in areas of labor in home building
Harry Maxwell- Citizen actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing
Dr. William McCormick- Citizen actively serving on Local Planning Agency

Members Absent:

Tracy Hayes- Citizen engaged in banking or mortgage banking industry
Karl Vierck- Citizen actively engaged as a Real Estate Professional
One vacancy- Essential Services Personnel

Guests Present:

Roberto Ortiz, Housing and Community Development Manager
Julie Voorhees, Housing & Community Development Support Staff
Mary Garcia, Social Services Support Staff
Joe McAnarney, Resident of St Johns County
Kelly Franklin, CEO, Betty Griffin Center
Frank Williams, Resident of St Johns County
Lindsey Rodea, Community Impact Coordinator, Flagler Hospital
Malinda Everson, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity, St Johns County
Shannon Nazworth, President and CEO of Ability Housing

Notices regarding the meeting were sent to all members. No press attended.

- 1) Introduction of AHAC Members and SJC Staff: Committee members and County staff were acknowledged and quorum was present.
- 2) Approval of Minutes: **Motion** made by Alex Mansur to approve minutes of February, 2022 meeting; motion seconded by Harry Maxwell. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 3) Administrators Report: Roberto Ortiz gave a brief overview of the San Marcos Heights and Victoria Crossing affordable developments. Mr. Ortiz reported that San Marcos Heights

received an overwhelming response to the news of pre-leasing application dates. Mr. Ortiz stated the first building at San Marcos is roughly one month away from occupancy and he said the Victoria Crossing project is nearly 25% complete. Mr. Ortiz said the property management company for Victoria Crossing recently advertised a toll-free number on their website for questions regarding pre-leasing information and there was a great deal of interest from the community. Mr. Ortiz said he will be presenting the Committee with a Power Point presentation on both of these affordable developments at the April meeting. Steve Ladrado asked if Mr. Ortiz would provide statistics in this report comparing the number of applications received for San Marcos Heights to the number of available units. Bill Lazar requested that Mr. Ortiz include as much information regarding applicants as property managers are willing to provide but he said he is especially interested in employment information he can share with the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Ortiz agreed and will gather that information.

- 4) AHAC Annual Report 2022 Review: Steve Ladrado said that when preparing their annual report in the past the AHAC has taken the approach to add and refine incentives listed in previous reports. While Mr. Ladrado said he has no objection to this strategy, he did open the topic up for discussion. Discussion ensued with regard to format and focus of 2022 annual report. Steve Ladrado said the AHAC has had some successes with incentives listed on previous reports and he asked Mr. Ortiz to research and report on the items that have gained traction. Steve Ladrado went on to suggest the Committee place some focus on incentive items 1, 2 and 3 at the April meeting. Shannon Nazworth suggested the deferment of impact fees would be a boon to affordable projects, especially in extraordinary times, and particularly for a Florida Housing Finance Corporation project. Ms. Nazworth stated impact fees will be approximately \$1 million on Ability Housing's project in West Augustine. Mike O'Donnell suggested that the deferment of impact fees also be a topic at the April meeting. Shannon Nazworth said she will send out a report to Committee members with regard to what other counties and local communities are doing in relation to a deferment program. Mr. Ortiz stated staff are currently working to develop a proposal to use SHIP funds for a program to help alleviate impact fees and he will report more details later. Frank Williams asked if the recommendation of a Public Housing Authority (PHA) in St. Johns County would be included in the report this year. A brief discussion ensued and Mr. Williams offered to send out a copy to Committee members of the proposal regarding a PHA that he brought to them last year. Lindsey Rodea commented it is difficult to work with the Duval County Housing Authority and agreed that this topic should be addressed again. Commissioner Dean asked if the Committee could discuss this in the upcoming monthly meetings as he would like to learn more about what a PHA does so that this topic might be addressed at a future Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting. Steve Ladrado and Mike O'Donnell proposed that a workshop be held with the Housing Finance Authority (HFA) of St. Johns County in order to discuss this topic. Bill Lazar asked Mr. Ortiz to coordinate this workshop with the HFA. Bill Lazar also asked if a new affordable housing liaison has been hired by the Growth Management department. Mr. Ortiz said he will inquire and request that a guest speaker from that department attend the April meeting.

Bill McCormick said he will send out information on next week's legislative session wrap up regarding the bills related to affordable housing. Steve Ladrado asked staff if they would forward to all Committee members the letter to the BCC listing the affordable housing projects they would like to see supported with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

- 5) Current Vacancies and Recommendations: Mary Garcia stated Greg Burke's appointment has been approved and he plans to attend the April meeting. Ms. Garcia also said Lindsey Rodea's

recommendation is currently waiting to go before the BCC and Alex Mansur's position is up for renewal, with the vacancy to be posted soon.

- 6) St. Johns County American Rescue Plan Act Funding Appropriation (ARPA)/Phase II: Commissioner Dean discussed the March 15th County Commission meeting and he said it was very productive, with a lot of input from County residents. Mr. Dean shared the ARPA funding priorities that have been targeted based on input from the community, stating \$5 million proposed to be allocated to the West Augustine medical facility; \$7 million proposed for repairs and added infrastructure to the wastewater facility in Hastings; and \$2.28 million proposed to a new Home Again St. Johns facility, which will be located on SR 16. Mr. Dean encouraged the Committee to write a letter to the BCC suggesting prioritizing affordable housing with the phase III ARPA funding. Bill Lazar said he will draft a letter for review and signature by all Committee members at the next meeting in order to avoid any violation of the Sunshine Law.

- 7) Public Comment: Joe McAnarney asked if the County's emergency services personnel have a liaison within their respective departments they can speak to regarding housing. Mr. McAnarney also asked if the County has considered setting aside monies for first responders to purchase a home so they may live in the community that they serve. Mr. McAnarney also praised the AHAC for their hard work and dedication and he said it is the right time to request funding for projects as budget talks will soon begin for the new fiscal year.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15p.m.